

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

April 22, 2015 6:10 pm

Unicorn Golf Course Club House

Attendees: Dennis Visconti, Stephen Mc Donough, Aldo Ursino, Bill Previdi, Therese DiBlasi, Joanne St. Pierre, Maura Campbell, Steve Sylvester

Absent members: James Sarno, Julie Boussy, Jack Bracciotti

Other attendees: Larry Means, David Ragucci Town Admin., Ann Marie O'Neill Selectwoman, Carl Marchio Golf Pro, Atty Steven Colmbus, Rick Armato Unicorn Grounds keeper, Bob Grover DPW Head.

The purpose of the meeting was to meet with Mr. Marchio the Unicorn/Oaks Golf Pro, Mr. Ragucci, and Mr. Amato to discuss golf course conditions, operations and performance.

1. R. Amato gave a brief report on golf course condition. The course is in good condition after a rough winter. DPW made some improvements to the course late last fall by cutting down trees, removing stumps and building cart paths.
2. J. St. P. and others suggested that the course and club house grounds be enhanced by adding flower beds. T. D. suggested recruiting sponsors to maintain plantings etc. BP suggested that start by adding some large patio type planters with annual flowers at the first tee.
3. R. Amato says that the irrigation system is very old and needs a lot of work especially the control wiring. As it now stands much of the watering must be done manually.
4. B. Grover says that the golf course and DPW are both benefiting with the recent change in control of the golf courses coming under DPW oversight and control.
5. A question was asked about the Staffing at the golf course. There are 3 FT golf grounds keepers plus a FT mechanic, plus 5-6 PT personnel who work on the grounds. Mr. Marchio has 14 staff members (PT?)
6. Mr. Ragucci was asked about the Town policy regarding free golf for employees. He will research to see if there is a written policy, but it is his understanding that free golf is offered as a benefit to anyone who works at the golf course. Mr. Marchio says that former TA Dave Berry authorized free golf for all of his staff. Mr. Marchio previously estimated that approximately 1000 free rounds were played by golf employees each year. Many in the Committee felt that 1000 free rounds per year was excessive and would like to some limits put on the free golf benefit, and a written policy established.
7. S. S. asked why the golf revenue is down yr. after yr. Mr. Marchio responded that revenues for golf were down everywhere. He went on to say that Unicorn gets very little play by women golfers because it is a difficult course to play so women avoid it.
8. B.P. asked about the High Schools that play at Unicorn. Mr. Marchio said that Stoneham, Medford, and Malden all practice at Unicorn. Stoneham HS does not pay greens fees. The other 2 HS's pay the Town directly to the Town Treasurer. Neither Mr. M. nor Mr. R. knew if those schools paid in full or they got a discount from the Town. Mr. R. would investigate and report back to the Committee.
9. S. McD. Asked about how records were kept for rounds of golf played. Mr. Marchio keeps a tally on a "tape" and submits the tape to the Town each day. J. St. P. wants to get records for rounds played. Mr. R. says that the former Admin. Assistant at the Rink, Sue Hetu kept records of the rounds played and that he would be able to obtain those for us.

10. T. DB. would like to see a true POS system used at the golf course which could report in real time the rounds plays and revenue generated. Mr. R. says that POS system are too expensive, but M. O'Neill says that there may be systems available that will serve our needs at a low cost. She will investigate.
11. Maura C. wants to see more marketing of the Golf Courses. A. U. would like to a better golf course website, one that is linked on the front page of the Town Website.
12. D.V. wanted to know if the Admin. Position (at the Arena) will be filled when the current employee leaves as planned for another job? Mr. R. says that the position will be advertised and filled ASAP.
13. D.V. asked why the golf revenues have been declining for the last 13 years. An answer was provided.
14. D.V. questioned the comp. time policy for the Golf Superintendent. Mr. R. says the Super. necessarily works long hours and weekends during the Summer and therefore earns comp. time for the hours worked over 40/wk at time and half rate.
15. Mr. R. suggested that the Committee consider a new Golf Course Management Contract Agreement that would require the new Contractor pay the Town to maintain the course grounds plus a set payment fee to the Town for the right to collect and keep the revenue generated by the courses. Some of the Committee felt that this type of arrangement would still have some of the conflicts of interest that the current contract has with split responsibility for the courses.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM

Submitted by Bill Previdi